

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. An update service node having an application programming interface for administering the distribution of software updates on the update service node, the application programming interface comprising:
  - an update store for storing software updates;
  - an update web service through which the update service node obtains software updates from a parent update service node over a communication network, and through which the update service node distributes software updates to child update service nodes over the communication network; and
  - an administration application programming interface (API) through which an administrator establishes controls the distribution of software updates to child update service nodes and client computers, wherein the administration API is an object exposing a plurality of interface calls through which the administrator establishes said rules.
2. The update service node of Claim 1, wherein the administration API exposes a get configuration interface call which returns a configuration interface object for reading and writing software update administration configuration values to the update service node.
3. The update service node of Claim 2, wherein the configuration interface object is an IConfiguration interface object.
4. The update service node of Claim 2, wherein the administration API exposes a get subscription interface call which returns a subscription interface object corresponding to a subscription identifier passed to the get subscription interface call.
5. The update service node of Claim 4, wherein the subscription interface object is an ISubscription interface object.
6. The update service node of Claim 4, wherein the administration API exposes a get subscriptions interface call which returns a subscription collection interface object defined on the update service node.

7. The update service node of Claim 4, wherein the administration API exposes a get update interface call which returns a update interface object corresponding to an update identifier passed in the get update interface call.

8. The update service node of Claim 7, wherein the update interface object is an IUpdate interface object.

9. The update service node of Claim 7, wherein the administration API exposes a get updates interface call which returns an update collection object containing update interface objects corresponding to values passed in the get updates interface call.

10. The update service node of Claim 9, wherein the values passed to the get updates interface call include a deployed state object and an exclude hidden updates Boolean value.

11. The update service node of Claim 9, wherein the administration API exposes a get computer interface call which returns an client computer object corresponding to the a client computer associated with the update service node and that was identified in the get computer interface call.

12. The update service node of Claim 11, wherein the client computer object is an IComputer object.

13. The update service node of Claim 11, wherein the administration API exposes a get computers interface call which returns a computer collection object including client computer objects corresponding to client computers associated with the update service node.

14. The update service node of Claim 13, wherein the administration API exposes a get group interface call which returns an target group object that was identified in the get group interface call.

15. The update service node of Claim 14, wherein the administration API exposes a get groups interface call which returns a target group collection object including target group objects corresponding to target groups on the update service node.

16. The update service node of Claim 1, wherein the administration API is an IUpdateServer interface object.

17. An application programming interface (API) for administering the distribution of software updates on an update service node, the API comprising:

a get configuration interface call which returns a configuration interface object for reading and writing software update administration configuration values to the update service node;

a get subscription interface call which returns a subscription interface object defined on the update service node;

a get update interface call which returns a update interface object corresponding to an update identifier passed in the get update interface call;

a get updates interface call which returns an update collection object containing update interface objects corresponding to values passed in the get updates interface call;

a get computer interface call which returns an client computer object corresponding to the a client computer associated with the update service node and that was identified in the get computer interface call;

a get computers interface call which returns a computer collection object including client computer objects corresponding to client computers associated with the update service node;

a get group interface call which returns an target group object that was identified in the get group interface call; and

a get groups interface call which returns a target group collection object including target group objects corresponding to target groups on the update service node.

18. A software update distribution system for distributing software updates, the software update distribution system comprising:

an update service node; and

an administration application programming interface (API) associated with the update service node, wherein the administration API is an interface object exposing a plurality of interface calls for controlling the distribution of software updates, the administration API including:

a get configuration interface call which returns a configuration interface object for reading and writing software update administration configuration values to the update service node;

a get subscription interface call which returns a subscription interface object defined on the update service node;

a get update interface call which returns a update interface object corresponding to an update identifier passed in the get update interface call;

a get updates interface call which returns an update collection object containing update interface objects corresponding to values passed in the get updates interface call;

a get computer interface call which returns an client computer object corresponding to the a client computer associated with the update service node and that was identified in the get computer interface call;

a get computers interface call which returns a computer collection object including client computer objects corresponding to client computers associated with the update service node;

a get group interface call which returns an target group object that was identified in the get group interface call; and

a get groups interface call which returns a target group collection object including target group objects corresponding to target groups on the update service node.